

Despatch from the Right Honourable Earl Grey, Secretary of State.

— No. 1. —

(No. 166.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Earl Grey to Lieutenant-Governor
Sir John Harvey.

No. 1.
Earl Grey to
Lieut.-Governor
Sir John Harvey.
10 May 1849.

Sir,*

Downing-street, 10 May 1849.

I HAVE the honour to enclose some letters which have been transmitted to me by the Duke of Sutherland, in which you will find it stated that certain emigrants, bound to Prince Edward Island, having landed for a few hours at Pictou, the emigrant tax was levied on them there, owing, probably, to its not being set forth with sufficient distinctness in the passenger list that they were destined to Prince Edward Island, and that upon their reaching the latter place they were subjected to a fresh demand for head-money, and have only been hitherto exempted from its payment in consideration of their having entered into bonds for producing it if ultimately required.

As it would evidently appear a hardship, and cannot be supposed to have been really designed by the Legislature, that persons who land only for a few hours in their transit to other colonies should be subjected to the payment of emigrant tax. I should wish you to consult your law officers on this question, and to transfer, if it be competent to you so to do, the amount of the head-money levied on these passengers to the Government of Prince Edward Island.

I have, &c.
(signed) Grey.

Enclosure 1, in No. 1.

My Lord,

London, 5 May 1849.

I TAKE the liberty of appealing to your Lordship on behalf of some poor emigrants from Sutherland, who have been put to very great distress by what certainly seems an act of very serious oppression. On account of the destitution on the west coast of Sutherland, which in consequence of total failure of the potato crop equalled that experienced on the west of Ireland, these poor people were desirous to emigrate, some, having had acquaintance in Nova Scotia and in Prince Edward's Island, preferred those colonies: and as their poverty prevented their defraying the necessary expenses, I chartered last year three vessels, and paid the whole expenses for 1,176 persons (including women and children). They all had prosperous voyages, and the emigrants in two of the ships bound to Canada, have there succeeded, as on a former occasion in the preceding year, as well as possible; but these unfortunate people having on the contrary met with unkind, and in their case, really cruel treatment on the part of persons under Government authority in Prince Edward's Island, are in greater distress than could have been apprehended for them. Even supposing they should have been led by mistake to pay at a wrong time and place, this might surely have been set right without subjecting them to the privation while this already paid tax was kept still suspended over them without mercy for months in the beginning of their unhappy course. I can have no doubt that the colonial Government will satisfy the urgent request for consideration; the poor people are in the mean time suffering very severely. I trust that your Lordship will excuse my thus troubling you, as I feel compelled by the urgency of their case to do.

Encl. 1. in No. 1.

I send copies of letters which have been forwarded to me by Mr. M'Iver, my factor on the west coast of Sutherland, and of an extract of the Colonial Act relating to the subject.

Earl Grey, &c. &c. &c.

I have, &c.
(signed) Sutherland.

Enclosure 2, in No. 1.

Evander M'Iver, Esq. to James Loch, Esq.

Dear Sir,

Scowrie, 28 April 1849.

I REGRET to trouble you with the enclosed documents relative to some of our poor emigrants who went to Pictou last year; but as it appears to me to be a case of extreme hardship and injustice, I venture to send them, in the hope you may induce the authorities at the Colonial Office to interfere in the matter.

Encl. 2, in No. 1.

The

* *Vide* Governor's Despatch in answer, No 121, 13 June 1849, at page 69.